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Business, Leadership

Introduction

There was a time in American when agents of law enforcement could only watch as a law violator walked away. A time, when the agents were unable to return fire during a gunfight. A period when there existed no means of tracking criminals. A period when a state line acted as a great and impassable wall for law enforcers. A time when one's criminal exploits made him a legend. These men stood unopposed and took whatever they wished to take on a whim. In the year 1924, a young man started a journey to revolutionalize the modern day American law enforcement took off. This man was J. Edgar Hoover. This paper aims to explore the exploits of J, Edgar Hoover, the first director of the Federal Bureau of Investigations who was at its helm for more than half a century. The paper will look at his leadership approach and his general effectiveness in running the FBI as an organization.

J. Edgar Hoover was born in 1895 on New Year's Day. After his basic education, he supported himself through law school and in 1917; he became as clerk in the Justice Department. A few years later, he received appointment as a special assistant by the Attorney general and handed responsibility to head as section of law enforcement created specifically to gather evidence on some American revolutionary groups. (Cecil, 2011). Over the next few years, Hoover had the task of organizing and arranging the arrest and subsequent deportations of suspected communists. His hard work was recognized and he received appointment as the acting director of the newly formed Bureau of Investigations (later changed to the Federal Bureau of Investigations) in 1919. He later became the full time director in 1924.

Hoover ran this bureau until he died in 1972. J. Edgar practiced an autocratic leadership style (Parrish and Powers, 1998). Most of his staff was either terrified or awed by him. Everyone was desperate to be on his good side. His unyielding idealism as well as his iron clad self-preservation sense made him push the boundaries of acceptable social and political behaviour (Gentry, 1991). As the leader of the strongest bureau in the United States, Hoover was able to separate it from politics and in the process raise high standards for its agents (Naqvi, 2005). In addition, he enacted many effective crime prevention and detection programs. One of the leadership approaches that characterize J. Edgar Hoover is the leadership and power approach. As mentioned earlier, Hoover was a very influential leader who exuded power at any instant. The type of power particularly exuded by Hoover was legitimating power. Having been place at the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Hoover did everything to ensure that his authority was recognized. He personally oversaw every single activity of the FBI and determined the overall direction of the company. This was in regards to aspects such as crime prevention and detection. The other leadership approach that Hoover used in his conduction of business at the FBI was situation leadership. When he first took control of the Bureau of Investigations, it was just another government organization, which was not functioning to the best of its capabilities and abilities (Gentry, 1991). Hoover understood that he had to adapt his leadership style if he was to bring about revolution to the bureau. He adapted no nonsense and autocratic style of leadership to ensure that the ideals that he had for the bureau became a reality. In the end, he was able to bring about a complete overhaul of the

bureau that led to becoming tone most of effective law enforcement agencies in the world (Parrish and Powers, 1998). The other leadership approach utilized by was the directive leader behaviour approach. As mentioned earlier, Hoover personally took control of every task of the behaviour and gave directives that were supposed to be followed to the wire. For instance, in regards to the arrest of some of the most notorious outlaws like Machine Gun Kelly, he personally oversaw the entire planning process and was even present at the site of arrest (Naqvi, 2005).

Hoover was an aggressive agenda creator. From his first days in office, it was clear that this young man had a main agenda in mind, and this was to transform American law enforcement (Cecil, 2011). To do this, he had to break his main agenda to several sub agendas, which were more achievable at the time. Hover took a lot of time in his agenda creation process. He was famous for demanding a lot of extensive research to be commited and all the results submitted to his desk for personal scrutiny. His first agenda in office was to create a new image for the bureau and what better way to do this than to show the public that the bureau was indeed effective. His successful arrest or killing of some famous outlaws like machine Gun Kelly, John Dillinger and Machine Gun Kelly showed the public that he were serious. This success paved way for effective agenda development at the bureau. Hoover created visions for the bureau and then put in place strategies to achieve them (Gentry, 1991).

For the Bureau's agendas to be achieved, it was crucial that Hoover had the right people at the bureau. He altered the recruitment process at the bureau and oversaw a massive transformation in the vetting process of the persons

recruited to join the bureau. In addition, he established a standard of conduct for all agents of the bureau and made an official organization. Hoover also created an effective human network in the organization where information from the lowest ranked its agent made its way up the hierarchical chain without any hiccups and hitches. Hoover was also notorious for communicating directly to the Bureau's agents for his personal aspirations for the bureau. Before any task or mission, he laid out clearly what he expected and demanded that every instruction be followed to the wire.

Hoover's objective from his first day in office was to bring about change at the FBI. He was of the opinion that any law enforcement agency should be able to ensure the security of the citizens for which it was in the first place established to protect. The first thing that he did was to separate the Federal Bureau of Investigations from politics which would have naturally interfered with its effective functioning (Naqvi, 2005). He also enacted several changes that involved allowing federal agents to exchanging fire with criminals when it was necessarily as well as giving agent authority to go across state lines when pursuing criminals who crossed such lines in the hope that he would be left alone. By doing that, he made the Federal Bureau of Investigations a national agency that fought for the security of the citizens across the entire nation (Cecil, 2011).

In conclusion, it is accurate to state that J. Edgar Hoover is one of the greatest American statesman J. Edgar's unique style of leadership was instrumental to the success of the FBI. His vision, his agenda creation process and his execution of plans led to the achievement of many

objectives pertaining to the security of the entire American nation. His achievements resonated well with the media and with general society who heralded him as a great and effective leader. He was able to create a self-image that naturally drew people to him.. His effective leadership at the helm of the FBI helped to transform the bureau to its current form and status.

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